

DOCUMENT 2798

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES, PACIFIC
OFFICE OF THE THEATER JUDGE ADVOCATE
WAR CRIMES BRANCH

APO 500

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28 August 1945

SUBJECT: Report of War Crimes Branch on Atrocities.

TO: The Judge Advocate General
Washington, D. C.

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II. SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE:

Briefly summarized, the evidence adduced by the Investigator-Examiners is to the effect that:

St. Paul's College is a Catholic educational institution housed, prior to their destruction, in three buildings located in a square bounded by Herran, Tennessee, Georgia and Florida Streets in the Malate District of Manila, Philippine Islands (Ex. H). In September of 1944 these buildings were taken over by the Japanese and used as quarters and storerooms, the nuns being forced to move to such residences as they could find and they were warned to remove all religious objects and articles because "everything will be blown up" (R 28). No intimation was given as to when this destruction would take place but the Japanese were then becoming very conscious of the fact that a reckoning with the Americans was close at hand (R 88).

Japanese occupied these and other buildings in the vicinity from that time and early in the morning of 9 February, looters broke into one of the buildings and took a quantity of rice and other stores which were kept there (R 16, 22, 83, 204). The persons responsible were not identified, so far as appears, although they may have come from a slum district at the end of Florida Street (R 118). Almost immediately thereafter, patrols of Japanese went through the area from Manila Bay inland to Dart Street, as far north as Herran and California Streets, and south to San Andres Street, gathering all civilians, men, women and children, saying that it was necessary thus to protect them from shell-fire, and that the whole Manila area was to be burned and herded them to St. Paul's College. No one was immune, people being taken half-clothed from their homes and even doctors on their way to visit patients being required to accompany the guard. Some were told that this evacuation was at the order of the high command and for their protection against combat activity (Ex. H; R 1, 12, 52, 164, 252).

At the entrance to the main gate, and also inside, money, jewelry, watches and such baggage as a few carried were taken from them (R 219, 133, 213). Inside the gate, some of the groups which were brought in steadily throughout the afternoon were told to kneel and pray before a statue of Christ which was enshrined there (Ex. A; R 52, 60) and then all waited in the garden or compound outside the main building. It began to rain and a portion of those present were taken to a small room from which, as others came in to crowd it unbearably, they were removed to a slightly larger room. Finally, the crowd there became so great and the stench and heat so terrible, they were again moved, this time to a dining-room approximately sixty-six feet long and twenty-nine feet wide (Ex. F; R 13). At a conservative estimate, approximately two hundred fifty people were placed there and the doors and windows solidly shut and barred. While so confined, witnesses noticed that the three hanging chandeliers were wrapped in black-out paper and that strings or

light wires ran from inside the "package" through the transoms to the outside. At about 1730 hours, five Japanese brought in biscuits, candy and liquor of some sort, placed them in the center of the room and, through some Indians who were among the captive group, told the crowd that they would be safe in this room, that their houses were to be burned and that they might eat and drink, then these Japanese left. A rush for the candy and biscuits followed, and within a matter of moments, three explosions proved that the covered chandeliers were nothing less than grenade traps. Pandemonium ensued; many were thrown to the floor by the blast, others milled about in panic, and Japanese outside began machine-gunning and throwing grenades into the room through the windows and also into the crowds in the corridors. The force of the explosions broke out the windows of the building and a section of the compound wall and through these holes those who were able began to escape (Ex. B, C-1, C-3). In the hail of machine-gun and rifle fire, many of these persons were killed, some to lie grotesquely sprawled across the compound wall where they had been stopped in their flight by the bullets of the guards; others got to Florida Street where they were bayoneted and machine-gunned, while still others fled to the nearby homes of Mr. GLORIA, Mr. MARASIGAN and Dr. VELARDE (Ex. H) but many of them were tracked down and bayoneted or shot to death although they had hidden in every conceivable place (R 3, 8, 14, 18, 39, 45, 53, 64, 70, 75, 172, 333).

A recital of each particular incident, besides being encyclopaedic in size, would serve no useful purpose, hence the following are presented as examples which, with the preceding general background description, illustrate the awful enormity of the massacre which took place:

Inside the classroom at the college after the explosions, gasoline which had been standing in open drums about the gardens, was sprinkled over the dead and wounded and set afire (R 8, 277).

Swinging her upright by her hair, a Japanese enlisted man paused, with his sword in mid-air, to attract the laughing attention of his comrades before bringing it down on the neck of a young girl who had tried to hide in the yard of a nearby house (R 18).

With the mother screaming her wish that she and not her baby be killed, a Jap took the child from her, swung it high in the air, and caught it on his bayonet as it fell. He and his comrades then began the wholesale execution of approximately sixty people caught after escaping from St. Paul's (R 148).

Curiously kind in this atmosphere of cruelty, one Japanese told a twelve year old boy who had escaped that he must hide, then let him go, warning that he would be shot if seen (R 293).

More in character was the Japanese officer who, catching up in the street with an aged man who had escaped, drew his pistol and shot pointblank, then struck him after he had fallen (R 14).

An air-raid shelter at the Marasigan home in which some of the escapees had taken shelter was grenade by the Japanese without even a prior examination to ascertain the identity of the occupants; thirty-seven bodies were found there (R 18, 41).

A group of perhaps fifty escapees were lined up in the college garden, forced to kneel, and were then machine-gunned and bayoneted to death (R 134).

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Darkness brought a cessation of the butchery and the cries of the wounded finally summoned such aid was available (R 18). Such burial of the dead as could be made was accomplished haphazardly during lulls of shell-fire and as sanitation necessitated (R 23, 84); thirty-two were not buried on the college grounds until 28 February by the undertaker for the city of Manila and due to the burning and the advanced state of putrefaction, identification was seldom possible (Ex. D, D-1; R 28, 37).

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